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741·2 grains of carbon, being 196·7 grains more than it had received; and it had also gained in absolute weight 27 grains. The conclusion which the author deduces from these experiments is, that carbon is actually formed or secreted by animals.

May 9, 1844.

JAMES WALKER, Esq., V.P., in the Chair.

“On the Hyssop of Scripture.” By J. F. Royle, M.D., F.R.S., &c.

Many attempts have at different times been made, by various authors, to identify the plant which, in our authorized version of the Scriptures, is translated *Hyssop*. The author enters at large into the history of the speculations of former writers on this subject; and after an elaborate investigation, is led to the conclusion that this plant is the *Capparis spinosa* of Linnæus, or Caper plant, a shrub abundantly met with in the south of Europe, where it appears to be indigenous, and also generally on the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean, as well as in Lower Egypt and in Syria.

May 16, 1844.

The MARQUIS OF NORTHAMPTON, President, in the Chair.

1. “On the Measurement of Distances by the Telescope.” By Edmund Bowman, Esq., C.E. Communicated by S. Hunter Christie, Esq., Sec. R.S.

The method proposed by the author for determining distances by means of a telescope, consists in placing, at the spot of which the distance is required, a graduated staff, and observing the number of its divisions comprehended in the field of the telescope, or included between fixed points in a diaphragm placed in the focus of the eyeglass. He finds that the number of these divisions, apparent in the field of view, are directly as the distance of the staff, plus a certain constant, which depends on the construction of the instrument. The author investigates the value of this constant, and illustrates the practical applications of his method, which he thinks might be employed with great advantage in surveying, when, from irregularities of ground or difficulties of access, the direct measurement by the chain would be inconvenient or impossible.

2. “An Account of some Experiments exhibiting new instances of the Absorbing Power of Streams; with a few remarks on the Pulsation of Jets.” By Mr. G. Robinson. Communicated by W. Bowman, Esq., F.R.S.

The experiments of which an account is given in this paper

illustrate the absorbing power of a stream of fluid, whether issuing from the open orifice of a reservoir, or flowing through rigid tubes. The effects of this power are seen in the position of the fluid contained in a vertical tube open at both ends, placed within the reservoir, and of which one end is brought within the influence of the effluent stream; and also, when one end of a bent tube is brought into the stream issuing from the open orifice of a reservoir, while the other end is immersed in a coloured fluid. The author accounts for the intermitting or pulsatory character of the jet issuing from an open horizontal pipe, having a small hole on the upper side, by the introduction of air, which, accumulating from time to time, forms a bubble, which when it has attained a certain size, occasions an obstruction to the free passage of the liquid, until the obstacle is overcome by increased pressure from behind, and the jet then resumes its former velocity. These changes occurring periodically, give rise to the appearance of pulsation which is observed in these circumstances.

May 23, 1844.

ROBERT BROWN, Esq., V.P., in the Chair.

1. "Meteorological Register kept at the Master Attendant's Office, Trincomalee, between the 1st of September, 1843, and the 29th of February, 1844." By Joseph Higgs, Master Attendant. Communicated by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

2. "On the supposed Properties of the Electric and Magnetic Fluids." By W. F. Stevenson, Esq., F.R.S.

The author is of opinion that electricity is a single undecomposable fluid, and that the distinction usually made into vitreous and resinous, or positive and negative electricities, is derived altogether from the direction of its motion and the circumstances under which it is presented; and, according as it is found on a conducting or non-conducting body, it is positive in the former case and negative in the latter. The quality of the electricity is, according to the author, modified by the form of the conducting body, which, when globular, opposes its escape; but, when pointed, facilitates its passage in a current. He considers the magnetic fluid as obeying the same law as the electric fluid, that is, moving in a current, which when aided, and not interrupted, will always be found positive, or having a north pole, at that end of the conductor or magnet where the fluid is escaping; and negative, or with a southern polarity, at the opposite extremity.

3. "De l'Education des Animaux; faisant suite à l'ouvrage publié en 1842, et qui a pour titre *Essai sur l'Education des Animaux*." Par St. Léonard de Lille, Membre de diverses Sociétés scientifiques, et de l'Athénée des Arts de Paris, et son Employé des Finances. Première partie de l'Institut et de l'Intelligence, Education et Civilisation. Communicated by J. F. Daniell, Esq., For. Sec. R.S.